

# INDEXA



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## A5100A Bhutan—November 2008

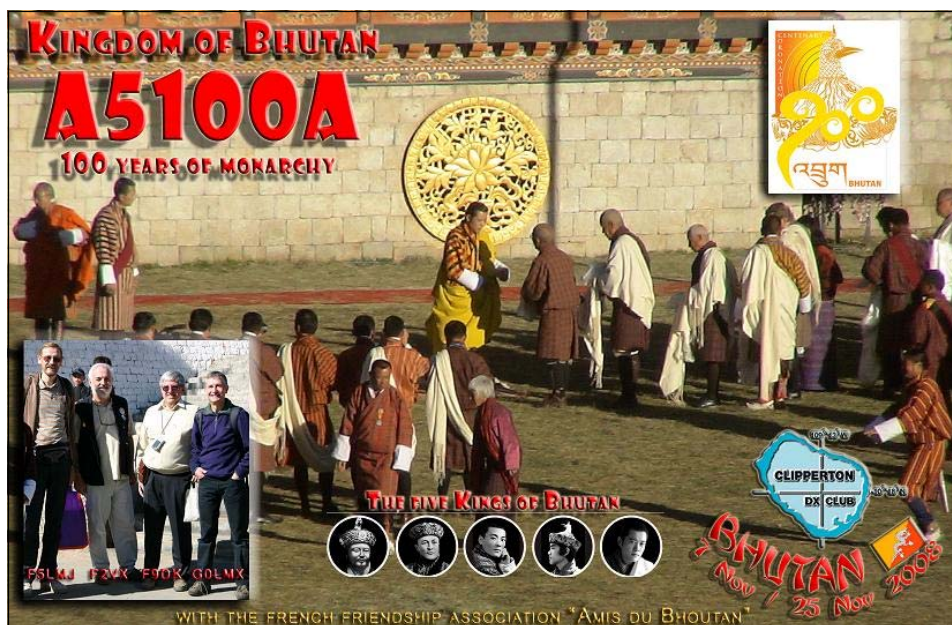
*By Alain Tuduri, F5LMJ*



After our previous expeditions to Bhutan in 2000 (A52FH), in 2004 and 2005 (A52CDX), we were again in the "Land

of the Thunder Dragon" for our 4th trip between 7 and 25 November 2008, the team being composed as before of Gérard F2VX, Jean-Louis F9DK, Vincent G0LMX and Alain F5LMJ.

The 2008 project was initiated towards the end of our previous trip in December 2005 when, during a meeting with the director of BICMA, government department in charge of telecommunications, we discussed the possibility of a special amateur radio activity for the Kingdom centenary.



The QSL Card of A5100A—Pictured on the card is the team that brought you A5100A: F5LMJ, F2VX, F9DK and G0LMX

With the help of Françoise Pommaret, French ethnologist who is president of the Franco-Bhutanese friendship association ("Friends of Bhutan") and has been living in Bhutan for several years, the project took shape in late 2007. Early 2008, communication intensified with Yeshey Dorji A51AA, in contact with BICMA, to develop a project for November 2008 covering different activities:

- Commemorate the Kingdom centenary and the coronation of the new King from the capital Thimphu with the special callsign A5100A (A5: Bhutan prefix, 100: Centenary of the Kingdom)
- Offer to BICMA on behalf of the amateur radio community, two complete radio stations to set up an emergency link between a very isolated valley in the extreme north of the country and its chief district town.
- After our stay in Thimphu, operate from Ogyen-Choling and Jakar in the province of Bumthang (central Bhutan), then from Haa and Paro, two other provinces in the west.
- Meet Pradan, A51PN, one of the pioneers of amateur radio in Bhutan, in the south of the country near

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## A5100A Bhutan—November 2008 (Con'd)



**Zangto Pelri temple in Thimphu**

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the Indian border. Unfortunately we found, when already in Bhutan, that Pradan was seriously ill and we were unable to meet with him.

- Finally, outside our radio activity, we worked with a school from Strasbourg on providing sports equipment to two schools in the remote valley of Tang in the central province of Bumthang.



**Thimphu, the ceremonies**

It was only after confirmation of our trip that we learned that the date for the coronation of the new King had been set for Thursday 6 November 2008, followed by a week of festivities. Our arrival was scheduled for Friday 7 November.

At the Jambayang resort, in the hills above Thimphu,

just above the stadium where the ceremonies were taking place, we had the best view. The crowd would fill the stadium as early as sunrise at 6AM and the ceremonies would then begin, continuing until the evening, punctuated by shouts, dances and songs.

On the first Sunday, after having completed our station installation, we were able to go to the stadium and experience for ourselves the great fervor and elation of the Bhutanese people. It was really impressive!

### Radio Operations

We were in Thimphu from 7 to 17 November for 10 days of activity, including two weekends, from the Jambayang. Unfortunately, some of the equipment that we had used during our 2005 expedition and left



**Jean-Louis, F9DK, enjoying his role of “guarding” the INDEXA flag.**

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in Thimphu had been lost. We were therefore able to put only one station on the air, thus reducing our ability to handle traffic. The antennas consisted of a 5 band Spiderbeam, a vertical, a full-size G5RV, and a dipole cut on site for 160M

We made more than 5350 contacts. Some were made by A51PR during the BICMA visit to our station in the Jambayang on 14 November. As in 2005, digital modes were a major disappointment due to the high level of QRN, making signals very difficult to copy.



**Alain, F5LMJ, in Ogyen-Cholling**

On 18 and 19 November, in Ogyen-Choling, we made 174 contacts with a FT-757 powered by solar panels, with 30W to 60W into a G5RV.



**Gérard, F2VX, with Pema, A51PR.**

From 20 to 24 November, from Jakar, Haa and Paro, we again used the FT-757 into the G5RV and made 265 contacts.



**Vincent, G0LMX, and Gerard, F2VX.**

In total, we made just over 5800 contacts, more than in 2004, with only one station and in spite of poor propagation, the upper bands being completely closed most of the day and heavy QRN / QRM being experienced on the low bands.



**The team in front of BICMA with Wangpo A51WD**

Our operating statistics are summarized in the table on the next page.

## A5100A Bhutan—November 2008 (Con'd)

Dates	QTH	SSB	CW	Digi	Total
Nov. 7-16 and Nov. 21	Thimphu, Jambayang	2125	3159	62	5346
Nov. 18-19	Ogyen-Choling	26	148		174
Nov. 20	Jakar	3	13		16
Nov. 22	Haa	4	12		16
Nov. 23-24	Paro	10	223		233
Nov. 14 QSOs made with A51PR	Thimphu, Jambayang	29			29
<b>Totals</b>		<b>2197</b>	<b>3555</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>5814</b>

Many thanks to the clubs, associations, and businesses, as well as individual OM and YL who have supported this new project. Special thanks to Françoise Pommaret; to Alain Duhaut from the company Druk'Air; RF-Ham, Radio-33, Batima Electronic, Inter Technologies, Icom France, Clipperton DX Club, NCDXF, INDEXA, GDXF, EUDXF, UFT, Lynx DX Group, Chiltern DX Club, Western Washington DX Club, Bordeaux DX Group, Ref-Union, The Friends of Bhutan. Our thanks also are offered to the following individuals: N6OX, F1TE, F4AJQ, F4TTR, F5AAR, F5FLN, F5GKW, F5OZF, F5VHQ, F6AJA, F6AML, F6ANA, F6BIV, F8BBL, and F8ZW.



Everywhere we looked the scenery was simply breathtaking. This view is of Cheli La pass.

### Our project for the Tang Valley

The Tang Valley is one of the four valleys of Bumthang, Bhutan's central province, a two day drive from the capital city, Thimphu. It is a valley still relatively poor compared to the other valleys of Bumthang. It is isolated with the north end of the valley being a dead end, and it lies some distance off the main west-east road. There are no paved roads; electricity just reached the valley at the end of 2008, and there is only one health center for the entire valley.



With the children of Kharab school

Kharab and Misey Tang are two schools in the valley, under the authority of Ministry of Education of Bhutan, providing education to approximately 300 children. The government provides some basic supplies such as books, but the rest must be purchased by parents who do not always have the means to do so. However, education is seen as the key to social success by parents who did not have the same opportunity.

After fund raising by a school in Strasbourg and by the Bordeaux DX Group, supplemented by individual donations from individual French and foreign radio hams, we bought sports equipment in Thimphu that we then offered to the Kharab and Misey Tang schools during our trip to Bumthang on Thursday 20 November. The reception at the two schools was fantastic.



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Ogyen-Cholling village, in Bumthang area.

During our visit to the small village of Ogyen Choling, we also made a donation to the village forest community. This will be used to provide microcredit to the 23 families of the community

A big thank you to everyone who has helped to make these projects happen in the Tang valley. Special thanks to Sainte Clotilde school of Strasbourg, to Mr. Hauchard and Mrs. Bassn and also to their families.

—73 *Alain*



With the Himalayan Mountains serving as a backdrop, our team (left to right) is: Alain F5LMJ, Jean-Louis F9DK, Gerard F2VX, Vincent G0LMX

Below, monks, in Dechen Phodrang monastery.



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